

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 1 1. A method of document management, comprising:
 - 2 providing a document;
 - 3 scanning the document with a scanning machine configured to determine if
 - 4 the document has a machine-readable code thereon; the scanning machine being
 - 5 further configured to extract at least some information from the machine-readable code
 - 6 if the machine readable code is present on the document;
 - 7 providing a database of information that can be present in the machine-
 - 8 readable code on the document; and
 - 9 comparing at least some of any information extracted from the machine-
 - 10 readable code by the scanning machine with the information in the database to track the
 - 11 document.
- 1 2. The method of claim 1 wherein the providing the document comprises
2 printing the document with a printing device which prints the machine-readable code on
3 the document; and wherein the printing device is in data communication with the
4 database.
- 1 3. The method of claim 1 wherein the scanning machine is linked with a
2 copying machine configured for copying the document, wherein the information
3 contained in the machine-readable code defines if the document can be copied, and
4 wherein the copier is configured to copy the document unless the scanning machine
5 finds the machine-readable code on the document and extracts information from the
6 machine-readable code not authorizing the copying.
- 1 4. The method of claim 1 wherein the scanning machine is linked with a
2 copying machine configured for copying the document, wherein the information
3 contained in the machine-readable code defines if the document can be copied, and
4 wherein the copier is configured to not copy the document unless the scanning machine
5 finds the machine-readable code on the document and extracts information from the

6 machine-readable code authorizing the copying.

1 5. The method of claim 1 wherein the information included in the
2 machine-readable code includes one or more of a version number of the document, an
3 identification of an author of the document, a filename of the document, and a storage
4 location of a file corresponding to the document.

1 6. A method of automated document tracking, comprising:
2 generating a primary image on a document with either a printer or a first
3 copying machine;
4 printing a machine-readable code on the document as it is generated; the
5 machine-readable code containing information, the printing device being in data
6 communication with a database so that the information printed in machine-readable
7 code on the document is also recorded in the database;
8 scanning the document with a scanning machine configured to determine if
9 the machine readable code is present on the document and further configured to extract
10 at least some of the information from the machine-readable code; and
11 comparing the information extracted from the machine-readable code by the
12 scanning machine with the information in the database to track the document.

1 7. The method of claim 6 wherein the scanning machine is linked with a
2 second copying machine configured for copying the document, wherein the information
3 contained in the machine-readable code defines if the document can be copied, and
4 wherein the second copying machine is configured to copy the document unless the
5 scanning machine finds machine-readable code on the document and extracts
6 information from the machine-readable code not authorizing the copying.

1 8. The method of claim 6 wherein the scanning machine is linked with a
2 second copying machine configured for copying the document, wherein the information
3 contained in the machine-readable code defines if the document can be copied, and
4 wherein the second copying machine is configured to not copy the document unless the
5 scanning machine finds the machine-readable code on the document and extracts

6 information from machine-readable code authorizing the copying.

1 9. The method of claim 8 wherein the machine-readable code is
2 configured such that it will not be fully reproduced on any copies formed by copying the
3 original document with the second copying machine.

1 10. The method of claim 9 wherein the machine-readable code is printed
2 with at least one of a resolution or tonal difference that cannot be reproduced by the
3 second copying machine.

1 11. The method of claim 9 wherein the machine-readable code is printed
2 with an ink that is not visible when viewed with only light in the visible wavelength range,
3 said ink becoming visible when stimulated with light outside of the visible wavelength
4 range.

1 12. The method of claim 8 wherein the machine-readable code is
2 configured such that it is reproduced on copies formed by copying the original document
3 with the second copying machine.

1 13. The method of claim 8 wherein the second copying machine is
2 configured with a second printing device that prints a new machine-readable code on
3 any copies formed from the document.

1 14. The method of claim 8 wherein the document is generated with the
2 first copying machine, and wherein the second copying machine and the first copying
3 machine are the same copying machine.

1 15. The method of claim 8 wherein the second copying machine is
2 configured to identify a user requesting a copy of the document, wherein the information
3 contained in the machine-readable code defines if the document can be copied by
4 particular users, and wherein the second copying machine is configured to not copy the
5 document unless the scanning machine finds the machine-readable code and extracts

6 information from the machine-readable code authorizing the copying by the user
7 identified by the second copying machine as requesting a copy of the original document.

1 16. The method of claim 6 wherein the scanning machine is linked with a
2 processor that is in data communication with the database and in data communication
3 with a second printer, wherein the information contained in the machine-readable code
4 defines a version of the document, wherein a digital representation of the scanned
5 version of the document is stored on the database together with digital representations
6 of other versions of the document, and wherein the processor is configured to determine
7 that electronic representations of said other versions of the document are in the
8 database, the processor being configured to enable either the scanned version of the
9 document or at least one of said other versions of the document stored in the database
10 as digital representations to be printed by the second printer.